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What did Mamma pay for it?
 Paid with Papa's feather-bed.
 What will Papa sleep on?
 Sleep on the washtub.
 What will Mamma wash in?
 Wash in a thimble.
 What will Mamma sew with?
 Sew with a poker.
 What will Mamma poke with?
 Poke with her finger.
 Supposing Mamma burns herself?

This is the end. Imagination apparently fails to answer the last question.

May Ovington.

BROOKLYN, N. Y.

The song is a corruption of that belonging to the English game of "Milking-pails." In this amusement, a mother is confronted by a row of daughters, who announce:—

Mary's gone a-milking,
 Mother, mother;
 Mary's gone a-milking,
 Gentle, sweet mother of mine.

The mother then bids the child, "Take your pails and follow;" whereon the disobedient daughter asks her to "buy me a pair of new milking-pails." The question is then asked, "Where's the money to come from?" whereon the reply is, that it may be obtained by selling the father's feather-bed, and a dialogue follows similar to that above printed. The washtub being sold, it will be necessary to wash in the river; in that case the clothes may be carried away, and the mother will be obliged to follow in a boat; the conclusion is, "Suppose the boat should be upset?" "Then that would be the end of you." A variant requires the mother to swim after the clothes. The fun consists in the pursuit of the unmannerly children, and their punishment. The game does not seem of very ancient character, and apparently has only been played in America in consequence of importation by recent immigrants. (See "Traditional Games," by Alice B. Gomme, London, 1894, pp. 376-388.)

W. W. N.

NEGRO SUPERSTITIONS OF EUROPEAN ORIGIN.—The farther proceeds the collection of negro superstitions in America, the more clearly it appears that a great part of their beliefs and tales are borrowed from the whites. In the preceding number of this *Journal* (p. 228) it has been remarked that a particularly primitive superstition, according to which it is believed that the "trick bone" of a black cat confers the gift of invisibility, is identical with that of Canadian Germans; in both cases the belief has led

to a practice. According to a common English expression, a black cat is said to be a witch. This opinion is indicated in a negro tale given on p. 68 of this volume, as collected by Mrs. Bergen in Maryland, "The brothers who married witches." One of the brothers, a miller, found it hard to obtain watchmen for his mill, those who undertook that office being driven away or killed. One man agrees to remain if he is given a sword. Black cats enter and extinguish the lights, and the watchman cuts off a paw, on which the cats fly. There remains a hand which has on it a gold ring, and this proves to belong to the miller's wife. In the old Irish tale of "Fled Bricrend," the hero, Cuchulainn, is set to watch in the hall of Cruachan, the royal house of Meath. Kittens are let into the house, who are beasts of enchantment; and the rivals of the hero, Conall Cernach and Loegaire, take to the crossbeams of the hall, leaving their food; a cat extends its paw to seize the provision of Cuchulainn, but he kills the creature with a blow from his sword. It is not said that the cats are witches, but that may be inferred. Thus the English tale now related by colored folk is connected in theme with ancient heroic saga.

W. W. N.

"BUFFALO CHIPS" AS A REMEDY.—In a case of gangrene, which many years ago came under my notice, a doctor of local reputation, who had passed a number of years at a frontier post as post surgeon, stated that if "buffalo chips" could be obtained, applied to the injured part after being charred and frequently changed, the effect might prove beneficial, the effect being both absorbent and healing. This advice was acted on with advantage, and, if tried earlier, might have proved efficacious. The remedy is employed by Indians to facilitate the healing of abrasions and sores, and may be worth noting in connection with the popular medicine of American aborigines.

Seneca E. Truesdell.

DAKOTA, MINN.

AN AZTEC SPECTRE.—To "Blackwood" for December, 1898, Mr. Andrew Lang contributed "A Creelful of Celtic Stories,"—beliefs and experiences gathered by himself in remote parts of Scotland and Ireland. One old seer in Glencoe enlightened him about an ill-omened spectre named Flappan: Flappan, whose "steps sound like those of a large web-footed bird. He is of the stature of a short boy, but his face it is difficult to see distinctly."

Rather singularly, a paper by Mrs. Nuttall, in this Journal (April-June, 1895), quoting from Sahagun superstitions of the Aztecs, mentions "a small female dwarf, whose apparition-at night was a presage of misfortune or death. This spectre is described as having long, loose hair to its waist, and as waddling along like a duck. It also evaded pursuers, and vanished and reappeared unexpectedly;" traits which suggest Flappan's half-seen face.

L. K.